

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-20 remain in the application. Claims 12-20 have been amended in order to correct claim dependencies. Claims 12-20 are now dependent on claim 11.

In item 2 on page 2 of the Office action, claims 1 and 11 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Koike (U.S. Patent Application No. 2001/0055229) under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

As will be explained below, it is believed that the claims were patentable over the cited art in their original form and the claims have, therefore, not been amended to overcome the references.

A certified copy of German priority application Serial No. DE 101 02 432.0 has been filed on March 12, 2002. A certified translation of the German priority application (Serial No. 101 02 432.0) is submitted herewith, in order to perfect the claim for priority and in order to remove the patent application to Koike from the prior art.

The patent application to Koike (US 2001/0055229) has a publication date of December 27, 2001, which is after the priority date of January 19, 2001 for the instant application.

The patent application to Koike is therefore no longer available as a prior art document.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claim 1 or 11. Claims 1 and 11 are, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art and since all of the dependent claims are ultimately dependent on claim 1 or 11, they are believed to be patentable as well.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-20 are solicited.

Please charge any fees which might be due with respect to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner and Greenberg, P.A., No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,

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MB:cgm

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